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TRANSLATION

Congress of Colombia

Ms. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Bogotá, April 15, 2008

Madam Speaker:

The decision of the United States House of Representatives to stay approval of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia is a blow to the Colombian economy, and affords colonial treatment to us that is unbecoming one of the United States' staunchest allies.

The Democratic Party's decision to involve Colombia in an internal electoral process is unfair, as national policy should rightly be placed above partisan considerations.

The argument that signing the FTA puts union leaders and workers at risk is even more seriously erroneous, given that under the framework of the Democratic Security Policy, Colombia has made great efforts to prevent crimes of that nature from occurring. The numbers speak for themselves: while 196 union workers were murdered in 2002, only 26 such deaths occurred in 2007. Our goal is to put an end to this scourge and achieve a prosperous, peaceful, developed nation with social justice.

In order to reach those goals, generate legitimate employment, and strengthen our economy, Madam Speaker, we require the decisive support and cooperation of our largest trade partner. Colombia's recent history is painful because hundreds of Colombians have sacrificed their lives in the war on terrorism and drug trafficking, both of which are stoked by consumer nations.

At this time Colombia needs your invaluable cooperation in the process of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Oscar Arboleda Palacio, Speaker  
House of Representatives of Colombia